

Message Text

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SUBJ: ECMT COUNCIL OF MINISTERS MEETING-JUNE 1976

REF: STATE 51163

1. ECMT OFFICIAL CONVERSANT WITH PLANS FOR UPCOMING ECMT COUNCIL MEETING INCLUDING AGENDA PROPOSALS IS ABSENT FROM PARIS UNTIL NEXT WEEK. WE WILL REPORT FURTHER AT THAT TIME ON WHAT WE CAN LEARN RE PREPARATIONS.

2. IN INFORMAL CONVERSATION LAST WEEK WITH CAVAILLE, I.E., PRIOR RECEIPT REFTEL, WE MENTIONED TO HIM HAVING HEARD THERE WAS SOME POSSIBILITY SECRETARY COLEMAN MIGHT ATTEND ECMT MEETING. CAVAILLE SAID HE HAD ALREADY HEARD THIS THROUGH OTHER SOURCES. CAVAILLE SAID HE WOULD BE CHAIRING THE MEETING AND HE VERY MUCH HOPED THAT SECRETARY COLEMAN WOULD BE ABLE ATTEND.

3. RE PARA 4 REFTEL EMBASSY CONSIDERS SECRETARY COLEMAN VISIT TO TOULOUSE FOR ECMT MEETING WOULD BE HIGHLY APPROPRIATE. EVEN BEFORE HIS FEBRUARY 4 DECISION ON CONCORDE SECRETARY COLEMAN WAS RECEIVING VERY FAVORABLE PRESS IN FRANCE, AND SINCE THE DECISION HIS STOCK HERE HAS GONE UP EVEN HIGHER. SUBSEQUENT DEVELOPMENTS AFFECTING CONCORDE LANDING RIGHTS AT NEW YORK HAVE NOT IN ANY WAY DIMINISHED ESTEEM IN UNCLASSIFIED

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WHICH HE IS HELD HERE, AND ON THE CONTRARY

FRENCH PRESS HAS PUBLICIZED CONCERN HE HAS EXPRESSED OVER NEW YORK DEVELOPMENTS. HOWEVER, SUBJECT TO HOW NEW YORK DEVELOPMENTS EVOLVE IN THE MEANTIME, POSSIBILITY COULD NOT BE RULED OUT THAT WERE THE SECRETARY TO VISIT TOULOUSE IN JUNE HE MIGHT BE GREETED THERE BY A FEW BANNERS AND PLACARDS BRANDISHED BY THE PUBLIC AND URGING REMOVAL OF FINAL US OBSTACLES TO CONCORDE SERVICE. ON THE ONE HAND, PROTESTORS WOULD LIKELY BE SEEKING MERELY TO PROFIT FROM INTEREST GENERATED BY SECRETARY'S VISIT TO GET MORE PUBLICITY FOR THEIR OWN VIEWS AND ACTIONS; ON THE OTHER HAND, THERE IS STILL SOME CONFUSION ON THE PART OF FRENCH OPINION AS REGARDS FEDERAL AND STATE JURISDICTION IN THE US AND ANY PETITIONING OF SECRETARY COLEMAN IN THIS MANNER WOULD SIMPLY BE RECOGNITION OF HIS STATUS AND ROLE AS SENIOR OFFICIAL CONCERNED WITH TRANSPORTATION MATTERS IN THE US.

4. WE FURTHER NOTE THAT PARA 4 REFTTEL SPECIFIES THAT VISIT, SHOULD IT TAKE PLACE, WOULD BE "EXCLUSIVELY FOR ECMT MEETING". SINCE CONCORDE ASSEMBLY LINE IS LOCATED AT TOULOUSE, WE THINK IT INEVITABLE THAT THE FRENCH, AND CAVAILLE IN PARTICULAR, WOULD TRY TO HAVE SECRETARY COLEMAN--AND POSSIBLY OTHER MINISTERS--VISIT AEROSPATIALE AND THE CONCORDE ASSEMBLY LINE AS PART OF ECMT ACTIVITIES.
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